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Contents and Abstracts

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Contents and Abstracts

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Robert E Carlson, Karen Kangas Dwyer,
Shereen G. Bingham, Ana M. Cruz,
Marshall Prisbell, Dennis A Fuss,
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Although scholars have recommended increasing relational variables in the classroom such as familiarity, acquaintance level, and collaboration to help students moderate communication apprehension (CA), few, if any, academic studies have investigated the relationship between CA and a supportive climate among students in the college classroom. Self-report data were collected from 523 undergraduate students from a Midwestern university who participated in a large curriculum assessment program using the Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI) and the PRCA-24. Results showed significant relationships between student perceptions of connected-classroom climate and CA levels throughout the course.

Suppressing Cultural Sensitivity:
The Role of Whiteness in Instructors'
Course Content and Pedagogical Practices 28

Laura C. Prividera, *East Carolina University*

Research indicates that students of color often experience marginalization in their academic pursuits at predominantly white institutions. This study utilized critical whiteness studies to examine how communication teachers who instructed basic courses enacted cultural sensitivity in their course content and pedagogical practices. Fifteen faculty at seven academic institutions were interviewed about their teaching practices. Three recurring themes emerged in the data analysis: (a) culture and absence, (b) culture and the marginal, and (c) culture and conflict. These themes revealed how whiteness functioned implicitly to place cultural and diversity issues outside of my participants' knowing and thus outside of their basic communication courses. This "white" framing impairs the ability of faculty to enact cultural sensitivity.

The First Year Experience (FYE)
and the Basic Communication Course:
Insights from Theory and Practice 63

David W. Worley, Debra A. Worley

Indiana State University

Institutions of higher learning increasingly focus on the first year experience (FYE), given the twin needs of persistence and retention. In view of this renewed emphasis, this essay provides insights from theory and practice exploring how the basic oral communication course (BOCC) can adapt existing basic course content and pedagogy, as informed by the standards established by the National Communication Association, to

more effectively address the FYE. Specifically, this essay summarizes FYE scholarly literature, reviews representative FYE textbooks, and discusses apparent connections between FYE, basic communication content, and the ways in which the BOCC can practically and naturally link to FYE initiatives.

Speaking Assignment Options:
Enhancing Student Involvement

in the Learning Process 102

David E. Williams, Narissra M. Punyanunt-Carter
Texas Tech University

This article reports on the use of speaking assignment options implemented at Texas Tech University. Students in the public speaking classes were given the option of delivering a manuscript speech or a reasoned response. The rationale for the assignment options is that students will be more motivated to perform an assignment that they have a choice in and seen more personal benefit in. The paper will address each assignment, how the speaking assignment options were implemented and some results from a survey administered to the students who completed the speaking assignment options exercise.

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants
and their Use of Nonverbal Immediacy

Behaviors in the Basic Communication Course 117

Wesley T. Durham, *University of Southern Indiana*
Adam C. Jones, *Missouri Western State University*

Over the past two decades, perhaps no instructional communication topic has been researched as thoroughly as teacher immediacy. However, one important area of the existing teacher immediacy literature that

remains underdeveloped is how undergraduate teaching assistants enact immediacy behaviors, and how, if at all, students respond to these teaching assistants differently based on the enactment of these behaviors. Thus, the purpose of this investigation was to gain a clearer understanding as to what, if any, immediacy behaviors are used by undergraduate teaching assistants in the basic communication course at a large Midwestern university. The researchers conducted 50 hours of observation in an attempt to determine the different types of immediacy behaviors being displayed by undergraduate teaching assistants in the instructional context as well as examine the effects those behaviors have on students. The results of this analysis are discussed.

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| Shawn T. Wahl, <i>Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi</i> | |
| Chad Edwards, <i>Marietta College</i> | |

We argue that in order to help forward John Dewey's vision of a pragmatist educational metaphysic, civic engagement through service learning in the basic media studies communication course is a possible plan of action. Specifically, we focus on basic media studies communication courses (e.g., introduction to media criticism, media and society, media and culture) and discuss ways to implement civic-oriented service learning activities for the purposes of fostering greater civic engagement. We draw on literature concerning media literacy and service learning that lead to a case study featuring application of Dewey's philosophy to a media literacy project. This essay is ontologically and epistemologically important as it adds to our scholarly

perspective of the service learning experience for teacher, student, and community, while also contributing knowledge about the inquiry process of basic communication course scholarship.

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Three studies were conducted to determine the extent of overlap between basic organizational communication textbook content (1990-2002), student perceptions of basic organizational communication knowledge and skills important for the workplace, and managerial expectations of communication knowledge and skills for graduates. Overall, findings indicate overlap on assigning importance to group/team communication, leadership, verbal communication, and conflict management; however, there were differences on a range of topics addressed in the basic organizational communication course deemed essential for job success. Implications of the studies' findings indicate that organizational communication textbooks could emphasize more "soft skills" such as interpersonal relationships, listening, dealing with conflict, and so on, because of the premium today's employers place on employees possessing those skills. Additionally, basic organizational communication instructors play a vital role in organizational communication education because they function as a "translation specialist" for the students and employers.

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